An Introduction To The Quraan

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All praise is due only to Allaah. We laud Him and beseech His aid and beg forgiveness only from Him and believe in Him and rely solely on Him. We seek salvation in Him from the evils of our inner selves and the vices of our actions. There is none to misguide one whom Allaah intends to guide. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship but Allaah, the One who has no partner. I also testify that Hadhrat Muhammad is the faithful servant and the Last Rasul of Allaah. May Allaah Ta'ala's mercy be on him, his family and his Sahabaah and may He bless them and raise their status.

Nabi Muhammad the most revered personality of all times was born on a Monday on either 8th or the 9th or 12th of Rabi'ul Awwal. There is difference of opinion about the date but not about the day. It is estimated that Rasulullaah was born 6155 years after Adam _, about 3913 years after Nuh's _ flood, about 2832 years after Ebrahim _ , about 2,287 years after Musa _ and 570 years after the birth of Isa _ .

The Earlier Prophets and Their Books

There is a tradition in the Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal that Rasulullaah said "Between Adam _ and me, Allaah sent a hundred and twenty- four thousand (124000) Nabis, of whom three hundred and fifteen (315) were entrusted with a Book."

In the Quraan, we come across a few references to the books revealed to Adam (Alayhis Salaam), the first Nabi.

Hadhrat Adam _ 's son, Hadhrat Shith _ was also a Nabi. It is suggested in some accounts that a few scriptures, were revealed to him. Parts of a book attributed to Hadhrat Idris _ , one of the earliest Nabis, were found only recently. A few scrolls were discovered in some caves near the Dead Sea in Palestine. The book contains a prophecy about Nabi which is also incorporated in the "Letters of Jehovah" in the New Testament.

After Hadhrat Idris _, we come across a few references to Hadhrat Noah _ . According to the Sabeans, they once possessed Noah's entire Book which is now extinct. Only some four or five lines remain which deal with morality. Hadhrat Noah _ is followed by Hadhrat Ebrahim _ .

The Parsis claim Zoroaster as their Nabi; this is possible because The Quraan mentions the Magians (22:17) whose religion is based on The Avesta, a book revealed to Zoroaster. Only about one-tenth of this version of The Avesta is available to us, the rest has disappeared. It comprises some details about prayers and a few commandments. The Avesta, among other things, contains the following statement of Zoroaster, ”I have not perfected the religion; hisname will be 'Mercy for the entire universe'“. This reminds one of The Quraanic verses in which Muhammad has been so called (See Quraan 21: 107).

In India, too, some religious scriptures are to be found. Hindus believe them to be revealed by Allaah. Among these Noble books are the Vedas, the Puranas, the Upanishads, and others. In addition to these ancient books, there are others with which Muslims are quite familiar, i.e. The Torah, The Zabur (Psalms) and The Injil (Evangel). The Book revealed to Moosa _ is generally referred to him. The word 'Torah' means law. The Jews attribute five books to Moosa _. The fifth is called 'Deuteronomy', which means retelling of old accounts, their updating, and elaboration.

In the beginning, the fifth book was not available to the Jews. It was six hundred years after Moosa that a man brought a book to the then Jewish ruler and said that he had found it in a cave. When Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of Iraq, invaded Palestine, he collected all the manuscripts of The Torah and set fire to them. Not a single copy has survived.
Muslims usually mention The Psalms or The Zabur after The Torah. The Zabur is also considered an independent scripture like The Torah and The Bible. Muslims generally believe that Injil (Evangel, Gospel) was an independent book which was revealed to Isa _.

According to Christian historians, there were more than seventy Gospels. Most of them were discarded as being of dubious nature and only four were considered reliable. Four persons in succession wrote biographies of Jesus and each called it a Gospel. What we have by the name of Injil is only a collection of biographies. We can call it the ”Life of Jesus”, like the biographies of Rasulullaah written by Muslim scholars.

None of the books revealed to ancient Nabi's has reached us in its entirety. That is why Allaah willed that a book containing all the commandments should be made available to man and that its authenticity should be preserved for all times to come. Such a book is The Quraan.

The Necessity for Revelation

Allaah Subhaana hu Nu Wa' Ta'aala has placed His entire creation at man's service. Therefore, after having arrived in this world, man is left with two unavoidable choices. The first is that he uses this world and its contents in a correct and justified manner. The second that he uses them, bearing in mind the commands of Allaah Ta'aala so that he does not commit any action which is contrary to the pleasure of Allaah Ta'aala.

To carry these responsiblities man needs education. Allaah Ta'aala has made available three means through which man attains knowledge of the aforementioned things. One is man's senses i.e., sight, hearing, taste and feeling. The second is through man's intellect, and the third is through revelation.

The knowledge that comes through revelation is not attainable through the senses or through one's intellect. For His revelation Allaah Ta'aala chooses one of His servants as His Rasul (messenger) and reveals His word unto Him. This is what is termed as ”Wahi“ revelation.
It is evident that revelation is not solely an essential of one's religious belief but a logical necessity. Rejecting it is, in reality, a rejection of the complete wisdom of Allaah Ta'aala.

The Meaning of the word Quraan

The majority of Ulema believe that the word Al- Quraan is derived from Qara, Yaqra'u, which means ”to collect“. This word was also commonly used to refer to the reading of written statements, which are a collection of letters and the words. Others say that Al- Quraan is so named because it collects the fruits of all the earlier Divine books, while others say that it collects all knowledge.

The Arabic word ”Quraan“ is derived from the root word ”Qara”, which has various meanings, such as to read Surah 17: 93, to recite Surah 75: 18, 17 , 46, etc. Quraan is a verbal noun and hence it means 'reading' or 'recitation'. As used in the Quraan itself Surah 17: 92, the word refers to the revelation from Allaah in the broad sense. However, the word Quraan was not always restricted to refer to the written form in the shape of a book, as we have it before us today.

The Quraan refers to revelation to Nabi Muhammad only, while the revelation to other prophets has been referred to by different names (eg. Taurat, Injil, kitab etc.).

The Quraan and its Names

The Quraan has numerous titles and names. In Arabic it is almost always mentioned with the addition of such lofty attributes as:

”Al Quraan al Karim“ The Bounteous, Noble or Honourable.

”Al Quraan al - Hakim“ The Full of Wisdom.

”Al- Quraan al Majid“ The Glorious .

”Al- Quraan al Adhim“ The Great or Sublime.

There is also “Al Quraan Dhidh; “Dhikr”, which is variously translated as “possessing eminence” or “containing remembrance” or, “full of admonition”, while Rodwell sees it as “full of warning”.

Definitions of Terms

The word ”Surah“ means literally eminence or high degree, and also refers to any step of a structure. In The Quraan itself it is applied to a chapter of The Quraan, either because of its eminence or because each chapter is, as it were, a distinct degree or step in the whole Book, which is thus compared to a structure. The chapters of The Noble Quraan are of varying lengths, the longest comprising fully one-twelfth of the entire Quraan and the smallest containing only three verses.

Originally the word 'Aayah' meant, an apparent sign or mark. In this sense, it comes to mean a miracle, but it also signifies a communication from Allaah, and is applied as such to a verse of The Noble Quraan as well as to a revelation or a law. The highest number of verses in a chapter is 286 and the smallest only three.

THE NAMES OF CHAPTERS (SURAHS)

It is an accepted fact that all 114 chapters (Surahs) of The Quraan were divinely named, i.e. their names were given by Allaah.(Tarikh Al Quraan (Al Abyari) p. 67/8)

We do find that certain chapters (Surahs) have more than one name.

The Eternal Existence of The Quraan

It is our belief that The Quraan is not a creation of Allaah, it was not created by Allaah over a certain period of time or at a particular point in time. Rather, it always existed. (Tahdhib Sharh as Sunnusiiyah p.55-60/ Manahil vol.1 p 18)

”The miraculous speech of Allaah was revealed to the seal of all Prophets and Messengers, through the medium of the trustworthy Angel Jibrael _. The Quraan has been documented in book form and

has been transmitted to us in succession. Its mere recital is a form of worship. It starts with Sura Al- Fatihaa and concludes with Surah an Naas. " (At- Tibyaan p.8)

Kinds of Wahy

One classification is on basis of recitation:

i. WAHY MATLOO. That Wahy from Allaah which is recited regularly. This term is used to refer to Al Quraan i.e., Wahy Matlwoo is that in which both words and meaning are from Allaah.

ii. WAHY GAIR MATLOOWl. That Wahy from Allaah to Rasulullaah which is not recorded in Al Quraan and is not recited like Al- Quraan. In this the meaning is from Allaah and words are from Rasulullaah .

How Revelation was sent to Rasulullaah ?

Revelation to Rasulullaah took numerous forms. Briefly, they are:

1) Direct dialogue between Allaah and His Rasul .

2) Through dreams

3) Through Jibraeel _ in his original form as an Angel.

4) Through Jibraeel _ in a human form.

5) Through Jibraeel _ in an invisible form.

6) By means of a tingling sound in Rasulullaah 's ear. This was the most difficult way of receiving revelation.

N.B. The most common ways were (4) and (5)

Times of Revelation

.Parts of The Quraan were revealed during the day, others at night, and some were revealed in winter and summer and others while Rasulullaah □ was travelling.

The Stages The Quraan passed through in its Descent

.The Quraan passed through three stages in its descent and it's revelation to Rasulullaah □ .

THE FIRST STAGE

The Quraan descended to the Al- Lowhul- Mahfooz. The Preserved Tablet came to being in the seventh heaven. How and when only Allaah knows. The Quraan descended in full and not as isolated Surahs and Aayats.

THE SECOND STAGE

The Quraan descended to Baitul Izzah or Al Baitul Ma'moor, which is a place above and beyond the Ka'bah in the nearest heaven. The Quraan was revealed to Rasulullaah □ over a period of 23 years. Besides, many traditions narrated by Ibn Abbas _ substantiate this descent.

THE THIRD STAGE

The Quraan was revealed to Rasulullaah □ through the medium of Jibraeel _ .

The Quraan's Descent to the First Sky

Ibn Abbas _ is reported to have said: ”The Quraan was revealed in the month of Ramadhaan, in the night of power, in its complete form to the first sky.“ He then continued, ”It was then stored in a

place called Bait al Izzah. From here, Jibrael _ descended with the verses, as commanded by the Almighty Allaah, throughout the period of prophethood. "(Tafsir ibn Abi Hatim vol 1. p 310/311 Hadith no.1650. Tabri Vol 2 p.198 Hadith no 2315. Ibn Kathir Vol 1 p.322).

The Physical State of Rasulullaah at the times of Revelation

Zaid bin Thabit _ was one of the scribes of Rasulullaah . He reports that on an occasion when he was called to write down the revelation, he sat next to Rasulullaah and Rasulullaah 's leg (thigh) happened to rest on his. In this posture Rasulullaah received more Wahy and Zaid _ says, "I never felt anything more heavy than the thigh ofRasulullaah (at the time of revelation)" (Abu Dawood Vol.7 P 132. Hadith no 2504). This was reported in regard to the revelation of verse 95 of Surah An Nisaa.

Asma bint Yazid _ is reported to have said, "Surah Al Maidha was revealed to Rasulullaah while he was seated on his she-camel called "Adba". It started wilting under his weight until we feared something of the camel might break." (Ahmad Vol.6 p.458)

Abdullaah bin Amr _ reports the same occurrence, "Surah Al-Maidah was revealed to Rasulullaah whilst riding his animal. He dismounted the animal, for it started wilting under him being unable to carry him. "

Umar _ said, "When Wahy was descending on Rasulullaah , a sound like the buzzing of bees could be heard by his face. " (Ahmad Vol.1. p34)

Aishah _ says that at the end of this narration, "I have indeed seen Rasulullaah receiving Wahy on days of extreme cold. When the process of Wahy had ended, his forehead would be dripping wet because of his perspiring." (Al- Bukhari Vol. 1 P 25/6 Hadith no 2).

The First Revelation

Ikramah ؇ reports that ibn Abbas ؅ said, “The Messenger of Allaah first received revelation at the age of forty and then stayed in Makkah for thirteen years. He was then commanded to migrate, whereupon he migrated to Madinah and stayed there for ten years until he passed away .“(Al- Bukhari Vol.7. p.199 Hadith no.3851). The first revelation of The Quraan came on the 15th night in the month of Ramadhaan in the 41st year after the birth of Rasulullaah Its first Surah, as is mentioned earlier, was revealed in the cave Hira, when the verse 'Recite in the name of thy Rabb who created …' came into being. The last verse of The Quraan to be revealed was, ”This day We have perfected for you your Religion …. “. This was revealed on the 9th Dhul Hijjah in the 10th year of Hijrah (63rd year of Rasulullaah 's life). Taking this into consideration, we therefore learn that the period in which The Quraan was revealed in entirety, was twenty- two years, two months and twenty-two days.

The first revelation that the Prophet Muhammad received is in the first verses from Surah al Alaq (96: 1-3, according to others 1-5):

“Read in the name of your Rabb, who created, created man from a clot. Read! And your Rabb is most bountiful. (He who taught) the use of the pen, taught man which he knew not.”

The remainder of Sura 96, which consists of 19 Ayat, was to be revealed at a later occasion.

The Second Revelation

The second Surah which was revealed after the period of Fatrah, according to the scholars of The Quraan, was probably a comparatively large portion of Surah al Qalam (Surah 68). The thirdSurah to have been revealed was Surah al- Muddaththir (Surah 74); and the fourth in order of revelation was the remaining portion of Surah al- Alaq (Surah 96, Aayats 6-19); then followed Surah al Muzzamal (Surah 73).

The second portion of The Quraan revealed to the Nabi Muhammad was the beginning of Surah al Muddaththir (74:1-5).

Other Early Revelations

Many hold that Surah al Muzzammil (73) was the next revelation. According to others Surah al- Fatiha (1) was the third Surah to be revealed (Suyuti itiqan, I, p.24).

The Last Revelation

Many Muslim scholars agree that the last revelation was Sura 2, verse 281:

'And fear the day when you shall be brought back to Allaah. There shall every soul be paid what it earned and none shall be dealt with unjustly.'

Others hold that Sura 5, verse 4 was the last to be revealed:
'This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islaam as your religion'.

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The Last Complete Sura To Be Revealed

It is reported by Ubaydullaah bin Abdullaah bin Utbah that ibn Abbas once asked him, “Do you know which chapter was the last to be revealed in its complete form?”

Ubaydullaah replied, “Yes, it was, Eetha Jaa a Nasr Rullaah hi wal fath”. Ibn Abbas replied, “You have spoken the truth”.

The Preservation of The Qur'aan

In the first place, it is necessary to know that The Quraan is in Arabic. Why was Arabic chosen as the language of The Book revealed to the Rasulullaah ? It is an established fact that all languages gradually change. Look at Urdu, for example. It is with great difficulty that we are able to understand a book written in Urdu some five hundred years ago. This is true of all languages of the world. In English, Chaucer for example, who lived some five or six hundred years ago, can be fully understood today only by a few learned scholars. This is also true of all other old and new languages. All languages change and slowly become archaic.

Had Allaah's last message been revealed in a language subject to similar change, it would have been necessary for Allaah to give us yet another book in the twentieth century so that we could understand it. Like other books of a long time ago, The Quraan, too would have become incomprehensible. Here is one language in the world that is exempt from the law of change, it is Arabic. It is a verifiable fact that the Arabic that we hear on radio or read in the press today is thesame as that of the day of Rasulullaah i.e. in the language of The Quraan and Hadith. There is no difference between the two by way of meaning of words, grammar, spelling or pronunciation. Had Rasulullaah been amongst us today and were we to speak to him in the contemporary Arabic idiom, he would have been able to understand every word spoken to him. Were

Rasulullaah to respond to us we would be able to fully understand every word of his speech. There is no difference between the Arabic of today and the Arabic of yesterday. From this we conclude that The Book revealed to Rasulullaah had to be in a language that was not subject to change. That is why Arabic was chosen. In addition to other characteristics such as eloquence, fluency, melody, etc, Arabic has a quality, which we can all witness for ourselves: is the unchangeable character of the Arabic language. For this we should be grateful to the Arabs who have not adopted different dialects as their language. Their language of literature and communication is the same today as was current in the days of Rasulullaah .

The Authorship of The Quraan

Had Muhammed in fact learnt from a Christian monk, a bishop, a Jewish person, or even from Christian slaves then the following might have happened:

1) Muhammad would never have denied it because he was respected all his life for both preaching and telling the truth.

2) He could never have preached a faith so radically different from Christianity and Judaism, particularly with respect to their basic creeds.

3) Under the circumstances, and considering the climate of antagonism existing between him and those who did not believe in his message, particularly the Jews and polytheists, his teacher's name could scarcely have remained unknown throughout all the years of Rasulullaah 's propogation.

4) Whoever taught him, would surely have written a book with at least a chapter similar to The Quraanic revelations.

5) The Jews, referred to in The Quraan as "the people of the book" had persistently cross-examined him, defying him and hiding their books from others. How then could they have taught him at the same time? If they had taught him anything, would they not have been careful to suppress the uncomplimentary references to them contained in The Quraan.

6) Had Muhammad not been sincere in his prophethood and honest in delivering the message, his relatives his friends and followers would never have been so devoted to him, nor would they have clung to his teachings in the face of devastating hardship and persecution. It is a remarkable tribute to the character of Muhammad and to those of his friends and followers that not one of them ever betrayed him.

7) The Quraan confirms certain Biblical records of previous prophets. Since the historical events in the Bible were originally revealed by Allaah to Moses and other prophets, this confirms that the source is one and divine?

8) If a divine authorship has never been claimed for the Bible by a Christian, why should Muhammad have risked additional persecution from his enemies by claiming The Quraan to have been revealed by Allaah if this were not so?

Challenge Unanswered

Though the Makkans failed to accept the challenge and to produce ten verses similar in style and in precept to the verses of the Noble Quraan, they continued challenging Rasulullaah impudently and presumptuously. Almighty Allaah once more comes to the aid of His Noble Messenger and reveals to him another challenge to the obstinate Makkans, which is mentioned in Surah Yunus 10 : 38 of the Noble Quraan. This time the challenge is a mild one:

”Or do they say, He has forged it? Say, then bring One chapter like this and invite whom you can beside Allaah, if you are truthful.“(Surah Yunus 10 : 38)

In Surah Baqarah 2: 23 the same challenge is repeated in these words:

”And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to our servant, then produce One Chapter like it and call on your helpers besides Allaah if you are truthful.“

In issuing this challenge, Almighty Allaah prophesied in the succeeding verse their inability and failure to produce a chapter like The Quraan and warned them of the grave consequences awaiting the disbelievers in these words:

”But if you do (it) not AND NEVER SHALL YOU DO (it) then be on your guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel, it is prepared for the disbelievers.“

The students of history know that although the Arabs proudly boasted about their superb mastery of rhetoric expressions and their eloquent styles of speech and therefore dubbed the rest of the people of the world as ”A'aajim“ (i.e. dumb people) yet they completely failed to produce a single verse similar to the verses of the Noble Quraan.

Almighty Allaah further defends Rasulullaah and clears him of this unfound and baseless allegation and consoles his distressed soul in Surah Ankaboot 29: 48. This disproves for all times the falsehood and the impossibility of the allegations against Rasulullaah that he forged The Quraan:

”And you (O Muhammad DID NOT RECITE before it any book, nor DID YOU TRANSCRIBE one with your right hand for then could those who say untrue things have doubted.“ (Surah Ankaboot 29: 48)

The infidels of Makkah were aware that Rasulullaah was an unlettered man, he knew neither to read nor to write. To allege that he forged the verses of the Noble Quraan arose from sheer bigotry, extreme jeolousy and deep rooted malice against Rasulullaah .

Collection of The Revelations during Rasulullaah 's lifetime

The Arabs of that time were well known for their excellent memory. They remembered by heart hundreds of poems of the Jahilliyaah period as well as the many details of the genealogy tables(Ansab) of their families. They even remembered genealogies of their horses and camels! Therefore it is not surprising that the Sahabah had committed the whole Quraan to memory in the life-time of Rasulullaah .

The Revelations used to be written down from the very early days of Rasulullaah 's receiving them. In Madinah, Rasulullaah had several persons who wrote down revelations when they were revealed. Rasulullaah himself instructed his scribes where to plan the different revealed verses, and thus determined the order and arrangement. Altogether there were approximately 43 companions appointed as official scribes. (Tarikh al Quraan (Shahin) p.119/ At Tibyan al Quraan p. 51/2).

The revelations were written on the branches of palm trees stripped of their leaves as well as on the bark of the palm tree. They were also written on pieces of cloth and leather, on the wide shoulder blades of certain animals and were even carved in stone and rock. (Al- Bukhari Vol. 8 P 627. Hadith no. 4986/ Tarikh al Quraan (Al- Abyari) p.86).

The order and arrangement of the verses was well known to the Muslims and strictly observed by them. The Angel Jibraeel went through all the revelations with Muhammad each year in

Ramadhaan, and went through the recorded Quraan twice in the year in which Rasulullaah passed away. There are numerous reports about the existence of the written Quraan in the form of a book or piece of writing (kitab) during the lifetime of Rasulullaah .

Readers of The Quraan among the Companions

Suyuti (Itiqan I: page 124) mentions more than twenty well known persons who memorized the revelation, among them were Abu Bakr , Umar , Uthmaan , Ali , Ibn Masud , Abu Hurairah , Abdullaah bin Abbas , Abdullaah bin Amr bin Al Aas , Aisha , Hafsa and Umme Salma .

From among them, the Nabi himself recommended four persons especially, according to the narration of Masruq:

Abdullaah bin Amr mentioned Abdullaah bin Mas'ood and said: 'I shall forever love that man for I heard Rasulullaah saying: 'Take (learn) The Quraan from four: 'Abdullaah bin Mas'ood , Salim , Mu'adh and Ubai bin Ka'b .'(Bukhari V1, No. 521)

Another Hadith informs us about those Companions who memorized The Quraan in it's entirety and gone over it with Rasulullaah before his death.

Narrated Qatada: ”I asked Anas bin Malik , Who collected The Quraan at the time of the Rasulullaah ?“ He replied, ”Four, all of whom were from the Ansaar : Ubai bin Ka'b , Mu'adh bin Jabal , Zaid bin Thabit and Abu Zaid .“ (Bukhari, V1, No. 525.).

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Memorisation of The Noble Quraan by the Companions ؓ

There were some Companions who were very involved in teaching of The Quraan. Among the famous teachers of The Quraan, were the following six:

Uthmaan bin Affan ؓ was the third Caliph of Islaam and one of the forerunners in the religion.

Ali bin Abi Talib ؓ was Rasulullaah ﷺ 's cousin and he was the first youth to have accepted Islaam and later became the fourth Caliph of Islaam.

Ubaiy ibn Ka'ab ؓ was one of the scribes of Rasulullaah ﷺ . Many were taught The Quraan by him. Among his students are the likes of Abu Hurairah ؓ and Abdullaah ibn Abbas ؓ. Ibn Abbas ؓ reports Umar ؓ saying about him: "

Ubay is the most knowledgeable among us about the reading of The Quraan" (Al- Bukhari Vol. 8 P. 664 Hadith no 5005).

Zaid bin Thabit was a scribe of Rasulullaah ﷺ who played a major role in the compilation of The Quraan during the caliphate of both Abu Bakr ؓ and Uthmaan ؓ.

Abdullaah ibn Masood ؓ was one of the seniors among the companions and one of the forerunners in Islaam. Rasulullaah ﷺ said about him, "Whosoever wants to recite The Quraan in a fresh and tender manner as it was revealed, let him recite it like the recitation of ibn Umm Abd (referring to Abdullaah bin Mas'ood)". (Ibn Majah Vol 1 p 49 Hadith no 138).

Abu Musa al Ashari ؓ was blessed with a beautiful voice which he constantly used for reciting The Quraan. Rasulullaah ﷺ heard him once and remarked: "O Abu Musa, verily you have been given a flute from the flutes of the family of Dawood ؑ ."(Al- Bukhari Vol. 8. p 170 Hadith no. 5048).

The six companions mentioned above were well known and noted teachers of The Quraan. However, there were many others who are also reported to have taught The Quraan. Among the Muahaajirun the following taught The Quraan: Abu Bakr, Umar, Talhah, Sa'ad, Hudhaifah, Abdullaah ibn Umar, Salim, Abdullaah ibn Abbas, Amr ibn Al Aas, Muawiyyah, Abdullaah ibn az Zubair, Abdullaah ibn as Sa'ib, Aishah, Hafsah and Umm Salmah.

Among the Ansaar there were Muadh ibn Jabal, Abu Darda, Majma ibn Jariyah and Anas ibn Malik taught The Quraan to others.

Anas reports: ”There are four who completed the memorization of the whole Quraan in thelifetime of Rasulullaah and they are all from the Ansaar. (They are) Ubaiy, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Zaid bin Thabit and Abu Zaid.“ When he was asked about the identity of Abu Zaid, he replied: ”he is one of my uncles.“(Al- Bukhari Vol. 7).

It is mentioned in another narration that Abu ad Darda also completed the memorization of The Quraan as well (Al- Bukhari Vol.8 p.664). This would then bring the number of those who completed the memorization of the entire Quraan in Rasulullaah lifetime to five.

In addition to these five, all the other Companions were also memorizing The Quraan. The only difference is that theses five companions were able to complete the memorization while Rasulullaah was still alive.

It is mentioned that among the four caliphates, only Uthmaan was able to complete its memorization although it was after Rasulullaah 's demise. (Tarikh Al- Quraan (Shahin) p.122).

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Collection of The Quraan during the Time of Hadhrat Abu Bakr

Hadhrat Abu Bakr saw it as his personal responsibility to collect and safeguard the scattered parts of The Quraan during the time of his caliphate (term of office). The details, the incentives and the manner in which he accomplished this task, are stated by Hadhrat Zaid ibn e Thaabit :"After the Battle of Yamamah, many huffaz of The Quraan e Kareem have been martyred and, if the hafiz of The Quraan-e- Kareem keep on being martyred in this manner in different places, then I fear that a great portion of The Quraan might become extinct. Therefore, my opinion is that you begin the task of gathering The Quraan e Kareem under your guidance." I said to Umar that which Rasulullaah himself had not done, how could we do it.

Hadhart Umar replied, "Allaah's Qasam! This task is nothing but virtuous." Thereafter, Umar kept on telling me this until I too found it acceptable and my opinion was the very same as Umar 's. Hereafter, Hadhrat Abu Bakr said to me, "You are young and understanding. We have no mistrust regarding you. You had done the work of writing down the revelation under (the very eyes of) Rasulullaah . Therefore, search for and gather the Aayat of The Quraan e Kareem."

Hadhrat Zaid ibn e Thaabit mentions that "Allaah's Qasam! If these pious leaders had commanded me to remove a certain mountain, then it would not have been such a weight on me as the task of gathering The Quraan." I said to them, "How are you to do such work which Rasulullaah had not done?", Hadhrat Abu Bakr said, "Allaah's Qasam! This work is nothing but virtuous." Thereafter, Hadhrat Abu Bakr kept on telling me this, until such a time that Allaah Ta'aala opened my chest to hold the very same opinion which was the opinion of Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Hadhrat Umar . Therefore, I

began searching for Quraanic Aayaat and gathered The Quraan e Kareem from the branches of date trees, stone tablets, and people's chests. For his important task of collecting The Quraan, the work of Hadhrat Zaid ibn e Thaabit needs to be understood properly. As a hafiz of The Quraan, he could have written The Quraan down from memory. Besides him too, there were hundreds of hufaaz at that time. A group of them could also have written The Quraan e Kareem.

A public announcement was made that whoever had any of the written Aayat of The Quraan should bring them to Hadhrat Zaid . When anyone brought him written Aayat of The Quraan, then he would verify it in four ways.

Firstly, he would confirm its authenticity by checking it against recalling it from his memory.

Secondly, since Hadhrat Umar was also a Haafiz, Hadhrat Abu Bakr included him also in the task with Hadhrat Zaid . Whenever anyone brought an Aayat, then Hadhrat Zaid and Hadhrat Umar would jointly receive it.

Thirdly, written Aayat would not be accepted until two trustworthy (reliable) witnesses would testify that his particular Aayat was written under the guidance of Rasulullaah .

Thereafter, these written Aayaat would be compared with the collection which had been prepared by different Sahabah .

With such extreme caution, Hadhrat Zaid ibn e Thaabit gathered the Quraanic Aayat and wrote them in an orderly fashion on volumes of paper. Every Surah was written on a separate volume. Therefore, this copy of The Quraan consisted of many volumes. This first copy is known as ”Um“ and its special features were as follows:

1) In this copy, Quraanic Aayaat were arranged according to the order shown by Rasulullaah , but the Surahs were not arranged; each Surah was written separately.

2) In this copy, the seven letters of The Quraan were gathered.

3) In this copy those Aayaat were gathered whose recitation was not repealed.

4) The purpose for preparing this initial arranged copy prepared by unanimous verification of the whole nation was that, it could be referred to in times of necessity.

These written books of Hadhrat Abu Bakr remained with him during his lifetime. Next, they remained with Hadhrat Umar . After the martyrdom of Hadhrat Umar , they were transferred to Ummul-Mu'mineen, Hadhrat Hafsah . After her death, Marwaan ibn ul Hakam burnt them since, by this time the prepared books (volumes) of Hadhrat Uthmaan were ready and the nation had unanimously agreed that, as regards the mode of writing and the arrangement of surahs, it was compulsory to follow those books (volumes). Marwaan ibn ul Hakam had decided that no such copy should remain which would be contrary to the final mode of writing and arrangement.

THE OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF HADHRAT ABU BAKR 'S COMPILATION

1) There was meticulous and intensive inquiry to verify the presented material.

2) Nothing was documented until it was proven that its revelation had not been abrogated.

3) There was consensus of the Ummah about the authenticity of what had been documented between the two covers of the Noble Quraan.

4) The comprehensiveness of this compilation ensured that it contained all the authentic forms of recitation.

Extraordinary Care Taken by Zayd bin Thabit in Compiling The Quraan Shareef

Rasulullaah used to call some of his companions to write down the verses soon after they were revealed to him . The writing down was usually done by Zayd bin Thabit but others also used to do it. It is reported that there were up to 43 Kaatibeen e- wahy who were the original writers of the verses soon after revelation.

The Compilation of The Quraan during the Time of Hadhrat Uthmaan

The compilation of The Quraan is known to Riwaayaat e- hadith that Hadhrat Huzaifah was engaged in Jihaad (religious wars) in Aazar Beijaan and Aarmenia. There he noticed differences amongst the people about the qiraa'at of the Quraan e Kareem. Therefore, immediately on his return to Madinah, he proceeded directly to Hadhrat Uthmaan and requested, ”O Ameerul Mu'mineen! Before this nation falls prey to differences and misunderstandings between people regarding The Quraan e Kareem as happened to the Jews and Christians, (you) treat (remedy) it.“ Hadhrat Uthmaan asked, ”What is the matter?“ Hadhrat Huzaifah explained, ”I was included in Jihaad in Armenia. There, I noticed the people of Syria reading Ubay ibn e Ka'ab's qiraat which the people of Iraq had not heard and the people of Iraq reading the qiraat of Abdullaah ibn e Masood , which the people of Syria had not heard. As a result, the one group is branding the other as kaafir. “

Hadhrat Uthmaan himself had felt this fear before. It was reported to him that in Madinah itself, such incidents had occurred where one teacher of The Quraan e Kareem had taught his students The Quraan

according to a certain qiraat and another teacher would teach according to another qiraat. When the students of different teachers used to meet, difficulties would arise between them and, on occasions, this difference could also be seen amongst the teachers who would judge one another's qiraat as wrong. When Hadhrat Huzaifah ؓ also drew attention to this fear, Hadhrat Uthmaan ؓ gathered illustrious Sahabah , deliberated with them and said, ”I have been informed that some people are telling others such things that their qiraat is better than others, and this could lead to the degree of Kufr. Therefore, what are your opinions in this matter?“ The Sahabah themselves asked Hadhrat Uthmaan ؓ ”What have you thought?“ He replied, ”My opinion is that we get everyone to agree on one book so that no difference and disunity arise.“ The Sahabah approved of this opinion. Accordingly, Hadhrat Uthmaan ؓ gathered the people together and delivered a sermon. He mentioned, ”You people, being close to me in Madinah Tayyibah, are falsifying and differing from one another about the qira'at of The Quraan e Kareem. From this it is evident that those who are far away from me will be falsifying and differing from one another on a larger scale. Therefore, all people should unite and agree on a single copy of The Quraan e Kareem which will be necessary for everyone to follow.“

Hadhrat Uthmaan ؓ requested Hadhrat Hafsah ؓ to send to him, ”those prepared volumes of Hadhrat Abu Bakr ؓ which were in her possession. After copying them down into the books they were to be returned.“ Hadhrat Hafsah ؓ sent those volumes, Hadhrat Uthmaan ؓ formed a body of 4 Sahabahs which consisted of Hadhrat Zaid ibn e Thaabit ؓ, Hadhrat Abdullaah ibn e Zubair ؓ, Hadhrat Saeed ibn ul Aas ؓ and Hadhrat Abdur Rahmaan ؓ ibn e Harith ibn e Hishaam ؓ This body was commanded to prepare, after having copied from Hadhrat Abu Bakr ؓ 's volumes, such books which consisted of arranged Surahs. Of these 4 Sahabis, Hadhrat Zaid ؓ was an Ansari ؓ and the remaining 3 dignitaries were

Quraishi. Therefore, Hadhrat Uthmaan ؓ said to them (the latter), ”When you and Zaid ؓ differ about any part of The Quraan (differ about which word pronunciation to use), then write it according to the Quraishi language, because The Quraan e Kareem was revealed in their language.“

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Chronology of the Written Text

AROUND 610 (AD)	Rasulullaah □'s prophethood message commences.	1st revelation in the cave of Mount Hira.	Transmitted orally, later written down.
610-32	Rasulullaah □ in Makkah and Madinah.	Continous revelation on numerous occasions,	Transmitted orally to Rasulullaah □. After memorization by many, the revelation was written down by various Companions on the direct instruction of Rasulullaah □ himself.
632	Rasulullaah □'s death.	Last revelation few days before this. At the death of Rasulullaah □, the revelation was completed	Complete revelation was available both in the memories of various Companions as well as on various writing materials.
632-34	Abu Bakr's ↔ caliphate.		
633	During the battle of Yamama, several Companions who knew The Quraan by	Abu Bakr ↔ instructs Zaid bin Thabit ↔ to prepare a single copy of the compete revelation. During 1st/ 2nd	Zaid bin Thabit ↔ brings together all the revelations into the suhuf from both oral as well as written sources,

	heart were martyred.	year after Rasulullaah 's death the entire revelation was copied onto sheets (suhuf).	demanding two witnesses for each piece. The suhuf remain with Abu Bakr
634-44	Umar caliphate.		The suhuf remain with Umar .
644-56	Uthmaan's caliphate.		The suhuf remain with Hafsa bint Umar
653	Campaign against Armenia and Azerbaidjan.	Differences arose among Muslims about the correct recitation of The Quraan. Uthmaan instructs Zaid together with three other Sahabah to prepare copies from the suhuf kept with Hafsa Several copies of the entire revelation available throughout the Muslim lands.	Zaid and three Companions prepare a number of fresh copies from the suhuf. These copies are sent to the various Muslim regions to replace other material in circulation. Suhuf returned to Hafsa . Uthmaan also keeps one copy (mushaf).

Differences between Makkan and Madinian Surahs

The following are the distinct differences between the Makkan and Madinian Surahs:

1) A large number of Aayats of the Makkan Surahs are shorter, as is seen in the 30th part of The Quraan (Juz Amma), while the Madinian verses are longer.

2) The Makkan Aayats do not provide details about theological matters, like the principles guiding the Salaat (prayers) and other modes of worships. These details are found mainly in the Madinan Aayats. In the Makkan Aayats, the teachings about the Tauhid (Unity of Allaah), Iman (faith), Rasulullaah , the angels the last day and the rewards and punishment are taught to the faithful.

3) Most of the Surahs of the group 'Mufassal', beginning with Surah Qa'af in the latter part of The Quraan, are Makkan.

4) All Surahs containing Sajdah (prostrations) are Makkan.

5) All Aayats beginning with the word 'Kalla' are Makkan.

6) All references to the hypocrites are from the Madinian period except Surah Ankaboot's. Verse eleven which is Makkan.

7) All the 19 Surahs with Huruf Tahjii are Makkan except Surah Al Baqarah and Surah Aale Imraan.

8) Most Aayat containing address ”O you who believe“ and ”O people of the book“ are Madinian, while the address ”O people“ and ”O mankind“ are mostly Makkan.

9) Every Surah in which, the word ”Kallah“ meaning ”most certainly not“ appears is a Makki Surah. This word appears 33 times in 15 Surahs and all these Aayats occur in the second half of The Quraan e- Kariem.

10) Every Surah that has a sajdha (according to the Hanafi school of thought) is a Makki Surah.

11) Besides Surah Baqarah, every Surah in which mention is made of the incident of Aadam _ and Iblees (shaithaan) is a Makki Surah.

12) Every Surah in which, permission for Jihaad is given or its laws are given, is a Madani Surah.

13) Every Aayat where mention is made of the Munafiqeen (Hypocrites) is a Madani Surah.

14) In the Makki Surahs, the words ”Ya Ayyu Han Naas“, and in the Madani Surahs the words” Yaa Ayyu Hal Latheena Aamanu“, have been normally used as a form of address.

15) Makki Surahs and Aayaat are normally short whereas Madani Aayaats and Suwaar (plural of Surat) are lengthy and detailed.

16) In general Makki Surahs prove the oneness of Allaah, Risaalat (Prophethood) and Aakhirat (Hereafter), the sketching of Hashr and Nashr (Qiyaamat), instructing Rasulullaah about patience and consolation, and the incidents of the previous nations. In the Makki Surahs, decrees and rules have been kept to a minimum. In contrast, the Madani Surahs outline the laws of heredity, sociality, the laws of Jihaad and battle, and penal laws and divine obligations (precepts).

17) The Makki Surahs emphasise opposition to idol-worshipping. The Madani Surahs highlight opposition to the People of the Book and the Munafiqeen (Hypocrites).

18) The Makki Surahs make extensive use of, metaphors, similes, and examples. On the contrary, the Madani Aayat's are simple in style.

Steps to Simplify Recitation

After the abovementioned great effort of Hadhrat Uthmaan ؓ to compile The Quraan, the nation agreed that it is impermissible to write The Quraan e Kareem in a manner other than the Uthmaani mode. After this, all books were written according to this manner. By preparing copies of the Uthmaani books, the Sahaba and Tabieen ↦ circulated The Quraan e Kareem on a large scale.

Up to this stage, because the copies of The Quraan e Kareem did not have any pronunciation signs such as dots and vowel points, the foreigners experienced difficulty in recitation it.

"Dots" to aid Pronunciation

There are different narrations about the first person who used pronunciation dots in copies of The Quraan e Kareem. A few narrations state that this great work was firstly done by Hadhrat Abdul Aswad Duiely ؒ. Some others say that he had done this work under the instruction of Hadhrat Ali ؓ yet others have mentioned that the governer of Kufa, Ziyaad ibn e Abi Afyaan, had him do it. One narration says, that Hajjaj ibn e Yusuf had it done by Hasan Basri ↦, Yahya ibn e Ya'mar ؒ and Nasr ibn e Aasim Laithi ↦.

It is generally accepted that dots were first added to The Quraanic script by Abu Al- Aswad ad Du'ali (Died 69 Hijri and his real name was Thalim ibn Amr ibn Sufyaan, Ghayah an- Niyaha Vol.1 p.345/6). This was done on the instruction of Ali ؓ when he witnessed the unnecessary faltering of non-Arabic speaking readers of the Noble Quraan. Abu Al Aswad inserted dots using red ink to symbolize the sound on letters (Tarikh Al- Quraan (Shahin) p.137 / Hady Ahl al- Imaan p.56).

Khalil ibn Ahmad (Khalil ibn Ahmad al- Farahidi Died 170 Hijri, Ghayah ab- Niyaha Vol.1 p. 275), a famous grammarian, later improved this method of sound identification. He deleted the dots

and replaced them with new symbols. He also introduced symbols for other applications such as the Sukun (tranquil sound). Madd (lengthened sound) and the Shaddah (doubling over a consonant) (Hady Ahl al Imanp.56).

Vowel Signs

As in the case of dots, initially the script of The Quraan e Kareem did not have vowel points (fatha, kasra, dhomma). Here too there are different narrations about who was the first to use the vowel signs. A few narrations have mentioned this to be initially the work of Abdul Aswad Duiely ↦. Others have said that Hajjaaj ibn e Yusuf had it done by Yahya ibn e Ya'mar and Nasr inb e Aasim Laithi ↦.

It is also accepted that Abdul Aswad Duiely ↔ had initially accepted the vowel points. However, these vowel points weren't those which are used today. For a ”(zabar) fatha“, one dot was placed above the letter; for a ”(zer) kasra“ one dot below the letter; for a ”(pesh) domma“one dot in front of the letter and for a tanween, two dots were fixed. Afterwards, Khalil ibn e Ahmad ↦ used the signs of Hamza and Tashdeed. Thereafter, Hajjaj ibn e Yusuf had requested Yahya ibn e Ya'mar ⎯, Nasr ibn e Aasim Laithi ↦ and Hasan Basri ↦ to insert both dots and vowel points in The Quraan e Kareem. On this occasion, to denote the vowel points, the present forms of (zabar) fatha, zesh (kasra), pesh(domma) were fixed instead of dots, so that they were not confused with the normal dots of letters.

The Seven Sections of The Quraan

.It was the custom of the Sahabah and the Tabieen ↦ to complete the writing down of one Quraan every week. For this purpose, they had determined a certain amount of The Quraan for daily recitation which is termed as ”Hizb“ or ”Manzil“. In this way the entire Quraan was divided into a total of seven Ahzaab.

Subdivision into 30 Juz

.The Quraan e Kareem is divided into 30 parts which are called 30 Juz. The division into Juz is not according to meaning but to simplify it to teach children. The Quraan e Kareem was divided into 30 more or less equal parts. At the time of copying down the books, Hadhrat Uthmaan had instructed that it be written in 30 separate books. Therefore, this division dates back to the time of Hadhrat Uthmaan . This division had been made after the time of the Sahabah to simplify teaching of The Quraan.

Printing of The Quraan e Kareem

When printing presses were invented, The Quraan e Kareem was first printed at Hamburg in the year 1113 Hijri. One copy is found today in Darul Kutubil Misriyyah. Thereafter, numerous Orientals had copies of The Quraan e Kareem printed but they did not gain acceptance in the Islaamic world. From among the Muslims, Moula e Uthmaan was the first person who had a copy of The Quraan e Kareem printed in the Russian town of St Petersburg in the year 1787. One copy of The Quraan e Kareem was printed on stone. Today printed copies are found all over the world.

Present- day Mushafs

There are seven main editions or ancient copies of The Quraan, two of which were published and used at Madinah, a third at Makkah, a fourth at Kufa, a fifth at Basra, a sixth in Syria, and a seventh entitled the common edition. Of these editions, the first edition has 6000 verses, the second and fifth 6214, the third 6219, the fourth 6236, the sixth 6226 and the last 6225. However, they all contain the same number of words 77639 and the same number of letters 323015.

Two other copies were also made and sent to Bahrain and Yemen respectively. The Suhuf were returned to Hafsah . All other personal copies of The Quraan, whether complete or incomplete,

were burnt. This was implemented by the order of Uthmaan ؓ and everyone responded to it (Tarikh al Quraan (Shahin) p.188).

Ali ؓ is reported to have said when he heard someone speaking about Uthmaan ؓ : " Be silent, for he did it by consultation with a large group of us (Companions). And if I had to face what he had faced I would have walked the same path." Concerning the burning in particular he said: "Had Uthmaan ؓ not done it, I would have." (Tarikh Al- Quraan (Al-Abyari) p.96/ Manahil Vol.1 P.188/Tarikh al- Quraan (Shahin) p.198).

The Beauty of The Quraan

The literary authorities at Al-Azhar University in Cairo point out the following ways in which The Quraanic style transcends the power of man and defies imitation.

1) The melodious harmony of The Quraan reflects neither the sedentary softness of the townsmen nor the nomadic roughness of the Bedouins. It possesses in right measure the sweetness of the former and the vigour of the latter.

2) The rhythms of the verses are more sustained than in prose and less patterned than in poetry. The sentences come neither in prose form nor in the manner of poetry but with a harmonious and melodic flow.

3) The sentences are constructed in an elegant style, which uses the least number of words, without being too brief, to express ideas of utmost richness.

4) The Quraanic words do not offend neither because of their familiarity nor because of their extreme rarity, but express admirable nobility.

5) The conciseness of expression creates such a striking clarity that the least learned Arabic- speaking person can understand The Quraan without difficulty. At the same time there is such a profundity, inspiration, and radiance in The Quraan that it serves as

the basis for the principles and rules of Islaamic sciences, arts, theology and the juridical sciences. Thus, it is almost impossible to express the ideas of the text by means of only one interpretation, either in Arabic or in any other language.

6) There is a perfect blend between the two opposing powers of reason, emotion, intellect and feeling. In the narrations, arguments, doctrines, laws and moral principles, the words have both persuasive teaching and emotive force. Throughout the whole Quraan, the language maintains its surprising solemnity, power, and majesty.

The Basic Purpose of The Quraan

The Noble Quraan, as a divinely revealed Scripture serves as four basic functions:

1) To invite man towards the right path of righteousness, peace and brotherhood.

2) To present clearly the necessary guidance for man's happiness and success in this transitory life and for salvation in the eternal life of the hereafter.

3) To explain Reality and Truth to men so that he may understand the purpose of life.

4) To warn man about wrong attitudes, the consequence of evil deeds and disobedience to Divine Commandments.

Quraanic Messages

.When the infidels of Makkah forced the Muslims -who were yet small in number- to migrate to Abyssinia and live there as refugees. The infidels sent a delegation to Negus the Christian ruler of Abyssinia requesting him to oust this small group of Muslims from his country.

Negus summoned the Muslims and enquired about Islaam from Hadhrat Jaffar ↔. Hadhrat Jaffar ↔'s reply to Negus is a masterpiece, drawing a comparison between pre- and post Islaamic Arabia of that time. He said:

“O king, a long period has passed over us in which the states of our ignorance was such that we had left one Rabb and were worshipping idols. To worship self-carved stones was our hallmark. Haraam eating, adultery, plundering, severing of blood relations, ignorant about the rights of neighbours, about kindness and justice, and about truth of beasts were our main features. In short, we lived a life of beasts where strong ones would feel proud of devouring the weak.

“See the miracle of Mercy that Merciful Allaah Ta'ala sent a great Nabi (Sallahu Alahyi Wassalam) among us whose genealogy and truthfulness we knew very well, on whose trustworthiness both friends and enemies were witness and who the nation was calling by the title of “Ameen” -trustworthy.

“He taught us the lesson of Oneness of Allaah Ta'aala, invited us towards One Allaah Ta'aala and told us that He has no partner and that idolatory is a sign of ignorance and hence is worth abandoning. Worshipping is the right of only One Allaah Ta'aala. He taught us to speak truth, stressed that we become truthful, and he ordered us to honour and strengthen our blood relations. He taught us to treat neighbours and the weak with kindness. He saved us from the curse of humanity, i.e. adultery, by declaring it unlawful and obscene. He taught us whom to marry and whom not to marry (Mahaarim and non-Mahaarim). He declared the telling of lies and the devouring of orphan's wealth as unlawful. He taught us Salaah and charity. He removed us out of the depths of bestiality and raised us up to the highest point of great humanity. O king! We have accepted his teachings and believe in them with the core of our hearts. This is our fault against which this delegation of infidels is complaining.”

Next Hadhrat Jaffar ↔ recited some verses from the Surah Maryam of The Quraan Shareef which moved the heart of Negus of Abyssinia, bringing tears to his eyes. He accepted the truthfulness of Islaam and embraced Islaam at the hands of Hadhrat Jaffar ↔.

This is but one example of how the Quraanic teachings enlightened the world of darkness in a very short span of time. 'Al Quraan' is the name of this last and everlasting Divine Message which does not address any particular region, sect or race only, but it is a Message for the peace and success of the entire world and of all ages up to the Day of Judgement.

What is a Miracle (Ijaz)?

According to Muslim scholars, the following five conditions must be met before an event can be accepted as a miracle from Allaah: 1) No one else but Allaah the Master of the world is able to do it.

2) It breaks the usual norms and differs from the laws of nature (not the laws of Allaah, but the normal way of nature).

3) It serves as proof of the truth and the claim of the Messenger.

4) It happens in accordance with the Messenger's claim.

5) The event occurs through the Messenger and no one else,

Various Aspects of Ijaz Al- Quraan

The Muslim scholar Al- Qurtubi ↦ (d. 656/ 1258) in his commentary on The Quraan has indicated the following ten aspects of the Ijaz al Quraan:

1) Its language excels all other Arabic language.

2) Its style excels all other Arabic.

3) Its comprehensiveness cannot be matched.

4) Its legislation cannot be surpassed.

5) Its narrations about the unknown can come only from revelation.

6) Its content is being proven by findings of modern sciences.

7) It fulfills all that it promises both the good tidings and the threats.

8) The knowledge about creation is only now being slowly proven.

9) It fulfills human needs.

10) Its input on the heart of men is most powerful.

Others, such as Al Baqillani (d. 403/1013) in his book Ijazat al Quraan have discussed the following three aspects.

1) The unlettered Rasulullaah . Rasulullaah has been called ”ummi“, unlettered. Some say that Rasulullaah could neither read nor write at all, but 'ummi' may also mean that he belonged to an uneducated people. Perhaps he did read or write a little or perhaps not at all. This does not affect his basic situation as 'ummi'. He was neither a scholar nor a historian and neither was he a philosopher nor a priest. The common view is that he did not even read or write yet he proclaimed The Quraan and recited its many Surat and Aayat in which he informed the world about the earlier prophets, earlier scriptures and earlier events, all in spite of belonging to an uneducated people in one of the most remote parts of the world and far away from the centre of civilization and culture. This is also one of the Ijaz al Quraan.

2) The unseen world. Another aspect of the Ijaz al Quraan are the many prophesies The Quraan contains which are possible only

with knowledge of the unseen world. The best-known prophecy concerns the historical victory of the Romans over the Persians, shortly after the Persians had defeated the Romans. This prophecy was fulfilled during Rasulullaah 's lifetime, when the enemies of Islaam could themselves be witness to it.

"The Roman Empire has been defeated in a land close by; but they (even) after (this) defeat of theirs will soon be victorious within a few years" (30: 2-3)

The defeat of the Romans had taken place in 614/15, when Jerusalem was taken by thePersians, while the defeat of the Persians began only seven years later, when the Romans won the Battle at Issus in 622.

Another prophecy is the victory of Islaam over all other religions (Surah 9:33 ; Surah 24:54)

3) No contradictions. Portions of The Quraan were revealed over a period of 23 years, some were short and others were longer verses, on numerous occasions and in a variety of circumstances. Had The Quraan been the recitation of a human being, then most certainly there would have been contradictions. The Quraan itself has pointed out this fact:

"Do they not consider The Quraan? Had it been from other than Allaah they would surely have found therein much discrepancy " (Surah 4: 82)

Criteria of Truth

How do we know that the revelation, which is called The Quraan Shareef, is the word of Allaah Ta'aala? All can easily understand the following criteria of truth.

1) PERFECTION: Since Allaah Ta'aala is All Knowing, His revelation must be perfect and accurate, free from mistakes, omissions, interpolations and multiple versions. It is free from contradictions in its narration.

2) RATIONAL TEACHINGS: Since Allaah Ta'aala bestowed reason and intellect to mankind, it is our duty to use these to distinguish truth from falsehood. True undistorted revelation from Allaah Ta'ala is rational and can be reasoned out by all unbiased minds.

3) NO MYTHS OR SUPERSTITIONS: The true revelations from Allaah Ta'aala are free from myths and superstitions that degrade the dignity of Allaah Ta'aala or man.

4) SCIENTIFIC: Since Allaah Ta'aala is the Creator of all knowledge, true revelation is scientific and can withstand the challenge of science at all times.

5) PROPHECY: Allaah Ta'aala is the Knower of the past, present and future. Thus His prophesies in His revelation will be fulfilled as prophesied.

6) INIMITABLE BY MAN: True revelation from Allaah Ta'aala is infallible and cannot be imitated by man. Allaah Ta'aala's true revelation is a living miracle, an open book which challenges all mankind to see and prove for themselves.

Science and The Quraan

The Quraan contains information about scientific facts which are in perfect agreement with the findings of man's scientific pursuits. Bucaille's approach in his book ”The Bible, The Quraan and Science“, (Indianapolis, 1978), is more cautious. He writes: ”The Quraan does not contain a single statement that is assailable from the modern scientific point of view“ (Introduction, p viii).

1) The earth was previously part of the sun and only after separation from it did it become a habitable place for

mankind (Surah 21:30).

2) All life originated from water (Surah 21:30).

3) The universe was in shape of a fiery gas which The Quraan calls dukhan (Surah 41:11).

4) The matter is made up of minute particles (Surah 10:62).

5) The oxygen content of the air is reduced at higher altitudes (Surah 6: 125)

6) In nature everything consists of complementary elements, not only in man and animals, but also in plants and even inorganic matter (Surah 36:36).

7) The embryo in the womb is enclosed by three coverings (Surah 39:6).

8) Fertilization of certain plants is done by the wind (Surah 15:22).

9) Microscopic organisms exist that are not visible to the naked eye, such as spermatozoon (Surah 96 :1)

10) Each human being has permanent individual fingerprints (Surah 75:4).

Subjects Discussed in The Quraan

After carefully studying The Quraan, the Ulema have observed that four main subjects are discussed in The Quraan. They are:

1.) **Beliefs:** This is divided into two categories:

a. The affirmative or positive aspects in which the following is established:

- Tauheed (The unity of Allaah)
- Risalaah (The Apostleship of Rasulullaah
- The Aakhirat (Hereafter).

b. The negative aspects in which the following groups are refuted:

- The Polytheists
- The Chrisitians
- The Jews
- The Hypocrites.

2.) **Legislation:** This is divided into three categories:

The laws pertaining to worship.

- The laws pertaining to mutual human relationships, such as trade, justice, testimony, inheritance, etc.
- The laws which are dual, i.e. they pertain to worship and to human relationships, such as marriage, divorce, criminal laws, jihad, etc.

3.) **Narratives and Happenings:** Two types are dealt with:

- Stories of the past, especially of the Prophets. The purpose of these stories is for man to learn lessons from them.
- Future events such as the signs of resurrection, description of hell and heaven etc.

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Analysis of the Contents

Some Ulema like Qazi Khan divide content matter of The Quraan in the following.

1) 1000 Aayats on warnings.

2) 1000 Aayats on promises.

3) 1000 Aayats on orders.

4) 1000 Aayats on prohibitions.

5) 1000 Aayats on stories.

6) 1000 Aayats on lessons.

7) 250 relate to Halaal.

8) 250 relate to Haraam.

9) 100 relate to Zikr.

10) 66 relate to miscellaneous topics.

THE LETTERS, VERSES, ETC. OF THE QURAAN

Moulana Abdul Qayyoom Nadwi observes in his book Tarikhe Quraan, that on the authority of Aaisha ــ The Quraan contains the following:

1) Verses: 6666

2) Words: 86430

3) (Zabars) Fat hahs: 53243

4) (Zers) Kasrahs: 39582

5) (Pesh) Domma: 8804

6) Mads: 771

7) Rukus: 540

8) Letters: 322671

9) Surahs: 114

10) Nuktas: 105682

11) Tashdeeds: 1253

Miracle of Sequence

The Quraan Shareef was revealed to Rasulullaah over a very long period of twenty-three years. It started with the word 'Iqra' in the cave of Hira when Angel Jibraeel first time came to him with the first verses of Surah Al- Alaq of The Quraan Shareef. Thereafter revelation of The Quraan Shareef continued in part over the next 23 years. The Quraanic verses cover a very wide range of topics and were revealed in relation to situations faced by Rasulullaah and his companions such as the incidents related to the battlefield, to marital relations with consorts etc. Some Surahs like 'Al- Anaam' were revealed in full. On the other hand, it is narrated by Ibne Umar that Rasulullaah said that Surah Al Baqarah was revealed in parts over a period of more than nine years.

When any verse or Surah was revealed to Rasulullaah , he used to call his companions and ask them to write them down. At the same time, he used to instruct them to place the verse or Surah in particular places. It is worth repeating that the sequence of revelation

of The Quraan Shareef and the sequence in which it was eventually compiled is different. The sequence that we have in written form today is not the same sequence in which the verses were revealed. Under Divine guidance Rasulullaah used to order his companions to place a particular part of the Quran Shareef at a particular place. It is well known for example that the first verses which were revealed were from Surah Al- Alaq and they are placed in the 30th Juz i.e. the last part of The Quraan Shareef.

Uthmaan bin Abu- Al Aas narrates that Rasulullaah once said when he was sitting with him, "Jibrael came to me and asked me to place this Ayaat in this Surah."

There are numerous Ahadith Shareef which prove beyond any doubt that the present sequence of The Quraan Shareef was established personally by Rasulullaah himself only and not by his Sahabah later on.

Muslim narrates an authentic Hadith Shareef of Rasulullaah from Abu Darda:

"One who learns the last ten Aayats of Surah Kahf by heart, is protected from Dajjal."

Similarly many Ahadith Shareef quote that Rasulullaah recited specific Surahs such as Al- Baqra, Aal-e-Imraan, Nisa, Aaraaf etc,.

Bukhari and Muslim narrate that Rasulullaah used to recite Surah Alif Laam Meem Tanzeel (As- Sajda) and Surah Dahr in the Fajar Salaah of Fridays.

All these Ahadith Shareef prove that the Surahs were sequenced by Rasulullaah himself. The fact is that verses of The Quraan Sahreef were collected and compiled by Zaid bin Thabit during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Uthmaan ,Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Hadhrat Umar after the departure of Rasulullaah from the world. However, we

should know that they only collected together the verses of The Quraan Shareef which had not been previously collected in one place. They neither added nor subtracted anything from The Quraan Shareef, nor did they change any sequence. The sequence was decided by Rasulullaah himself and the sequence which we have today is the sequence decided by Rasulullaah . The Sahabah al Kiram only compiled all the Surahs in one place.

Qazi Abu Bakr ↦ in Al- Intisaar says,

”The sequence of Al Quraan was an obligatory order and Jibraeel _ used to tell Rasulullaah to place a particular Aayat at a particular place.“

He further says,

”The whole Quraan Shareef was revealed by Allaah Ta'aala who ordered that it be kept safe in written form. Hadhrat Uthmaan ↔ , neither deleted anything from it nor did he add anything to it and its sequence and arrangements are the same as arranged by Allaah Ta'aala, Rasulullaah who confirmed the same arrangement and sequence. He neither brought any verse forward and nor did take any verse backward from its original position and the Ummah recorded the same sequence from Rasulullaah .“ (Al- Itiqaan)

The author of Al- Itiqaan writes that:

'The Quraan Shareef is written in the guarded tablet (Lowhe Mehfooz) in the same sequence as it is with us and Allaah Ta'aala brought the whole Quran Shareef down to Aasman e-Duniya from where it was revealed to Rasulullaah ”part“ as the need arose. The sequence of revelation is different from the sequence of recitation.'Ibne Al- Hissar said:

”The placement of a particular Aayat at a particular place was decided as per Wahi (revelation). Rasulullaah used to keep a particular Aayat at a particular place.“

Links Between Consecutive Surahs

Another evidence that the textual order of The Quraan is divine and not random can be noted from a study of the links between two consecutive Surahs in the Mushaf. A few examples would illustrate this point:

1) Surahs 1 and 2: The former ends with a supplication to Allaah that He may ”guide us to the straight path“ (1:6). The latter starts by indicating the guidance in its second verse:

”This is the book whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto the pious.“ (2:2)

Hence, this verse gives a divine answer to man's supplication at the end of the first Surah.

2) Surahs 8 and 9: The last two verses in the former describe the co-operative and brotherly behaviour of the believers and give the good tidings of the generous divine reward prepared for them. Surah 9 commences with a warning to the disbelievers, polytheist, and hypocrites. Thus, together these represent an impressive and instructive contrast for the reader who believes to induce him to follow the right path and to avoid the wrong.

3) Surahs 93 and 94 are both addressed to Rasulullaah . The former Surah comforts and tells him:

”Your Rabb has not forsaken you nor does He hate you. Verily, the later period will be better for you than the former. “(Surah 93: 1-2)

He is then reminded of Allaah's favours and blessings so far bestowed on him; protecting him when he was an orphan, guiding him when he was at loss and enriching him after being in want (Surah 93 : 6-8). The Surah ends by enjoining Rasulullaah not to oppress the orphan, not to chide the beggar, but to proclaim the

Rabb's favours (Surah 93 :9-11).

The subsequent Surah (94) starts by reminding Rasulullaah of some of the Rabb's favours:

”Have We not expanded for you, your breast,

And removed from you your burden which weighed down your back

And exalted for you your mention.“(Surah 94 : 1-3)

The bond between the two Surahs is clearly strong. From these examples and others, indeed from each and every single page of The Quraan it should be clear that this is not an ordinary book of history in which each sentence should follow the preceding one chronologically.

What is Tafsir?

The word ”Tafsir“ is derived from the root ”fassara“ to explain, to expound. It means 'explanation' or 'interpretation'. In technical language the word ”tafsir“ refers to explanation, interpretation and commentary on The Quraan, ”Tafsir“ refers to, all ways of obtaining knowledge, which contribute to the proper understanding of The Quraan, explains its meaning and clarrifes its legal implications. The word ”mufassir“ refers to the person who does the ”tafsir“ and commentator. The word ”ta'wil“, which is also used in this connection, is derived from the root 'awwala' and also means explanation, interpretation. In technical language, it similarly refers to explanation and interpretation of The Quraan.

Tafsir in the language of the scholars means explanation and clarification. It aims to pronounce knowledge and understanding of the Book of Allaah, to explain its meaning, extract its legal rulings and grasp its underlying reasons. Tafsir explains the 'outer' (zahir) meanings of The Quraan. Ta'wil is considered by some to mean the explanation of the inner and concealed meanings of The Quraan.

Others are of the opinion that there is no difference between ”tafsir“ and ”ta'wil.“

The Birth and Science of Tafsir

The four Khulafa Rashidun (rightly guided Khaliphs) ↦ were undoubtedly the early Mufassireen of The Quraan since they witnessed the coming of the revelation and learnt directly from Rasulullaah the meanings. Other recognized scholars of The Quraan in the time of Rasulullaah were:

i. Abdullaah Bin Abbas,

ii. Abdullaah bin Masud,

iii. Ubayy bin Ka'ab,

iv. Zayd bin Thabit,

v. Abu Moosa Al Ash'ari,

vi. Abdullaah bin Al- Zubayr,

The leaders of riwayat in tafsir, taken in order of the amount they related were, Ibn Abbass ‗, Ibn Masud ‗, Ali and Ubay bin Ka'ab ↔.

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Kinds of Tafsir

There are two kinds of Tafsir:

1. Al Tafsir Bil Mathur or Bil Riwayah

These ”tafsirs“ refer to the explanations and interpretations of the Noble Quran by The Quraan, the Ahadeeth, sayings of the Sahabah and the sayings of the Taabieen ↦ in Arabic.

2. Al Tafsir Bil Ma'qul or Bil Rai

In this kind of Tafsir, the commentator relies on his own intellectual reasoning and initiative to interpret the verses of The Quraan.

A disturbing present day trend is that even those who possess little or no knowledge of Arabic vocabulary offer their personal opinion on the basis of vernacular translations of The Quraan. The proponents of such ideas argue that since every man has the ability to reason, he has the right to interpret The Quraan. According to them, one does not need guidance from a learned person or the Tafsirs (commentaries of The Quraan) written by our learned scholars. Such proposals and encouragements can only lead to the dishonouring of The Quraan.

There are none who understand The Quraan as Rasulullaah understood it and taught it to his Sahabah . Therefore, after Rasulullaah , the most capable Mufasireen were the Sahabah who were the teachers of the Tabi'een. When seeking knowledge about the words of The Quraan, one should turn to the acknowledged Mufassireen and their ”Tafsirs“ and not to one's personal opinion.

The Mufassireen have laid down that anyone attempting to write a commentary on the Noble Quraan should be well versed in the following subjects. As can be seen that it is not possible for everybody to understand the underlying significance and real meaning of The Quraan.

When one does not find the tafsir of a particular Aayah of The Quraan, or the Sunnah or the words of the companions, many scholars (a'immah) turn to the words of the successors (Al-Tabieen).

Various Tafsir Sciences

LUGHAT. This refers to philology of the language, which helps to understand the appropriate meanings of words.

NAHW. This is the syntax, a branch of grammar, which helps to understand the relation of a sentence with another. It also refers to ”I'rab“ (vowel sounds) of a word. A change in “I'rab“ often means a change of meaning.

SARF. This is the etymology, the study of the sources and derivation of words and conjunctions. The meaning of a word is determined by the source and its conjugation.

ISHTIQAQ. This refers to the derivatives. It is necessary to have the knowledge of derivatives and their sources, because if a word has been derived from two different sources, it will have two different meanings.

ILM UL BAYAN. This refers to semantics. The meanings of phrase constructions are understood from the knowledge of figures of speech, like similes and metaphors, which express shades of meaning.

ILM UL BADI. This refers to the knowledge of rhetoric, which reveals the beauty of a language and its implications.

ILM UL QIRAAT. This refers to the knowledge of the art of pronunciation, because different methods of recitation sometimes convey different meanings.

ILM UL AQAAID. This refers to the knowledge of the fundamentals of faith. This is necessary to explain certain analogies.

USUL E FIQH. This refers to the knowledge of the principles of

Islaamic jurisprudence.

ASBAB UN NUZUL. This refers to the particular commandments that have subsequently been annuled or changed so that the cancelled commandments may be distinguished from the standing ones.

ILM UL FIQH. This refers to the knowledge of Islaamic jurisprudence. It is only through this knowledge that we arrive at a complete understanding of general principles. ILM UL HADEETH. This refers to the knowledge of such Ahadith that provide commentaries on certain verses of The Quraan.

ILM UL WAHABI. This refers to the gifted understanding bestowed by Allaah upon his selected ones.

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Self Opinionated Tafsir is Haraam and Forbidden in the Shariah

Rasulullaah said:

”Whosoever says anything from his own opinion in matters of The Quraan should prepare his abode in the Fire.“

In another tradition it is mentioned:

”Whosoever says anything in matters of The Quraan without knowledge should prepare his abode in Jahannum.“ (Sunan al-Tirmidhi)

One hadith further states:

”Whosoever speaks in matter of The Quraan with mere self opinion and utters that which is correct, then he too has erred.“

In short, he who deviates in his explanation from the views of the companions and the successors is wrong; nay, he is a mistaken

innovator, even though he is a mujtahid (trying honestly to reach the truth) and will hopefully be forgiven by Allaah.

We have discussed various methods of knowledge and ways of knowing the truth. We know that the companions, the successors and their followers studied The Quraan very carefully, and that they knew the meaning and the interpretation of its verses better than anyone else, just as they knew best the truth which Allaah revealed to Rasulullaah . Hence, those who deviate from their views, and explain The Quraan on different lines are wrong both in the ideas they expound and the arguments to offer. Their ideas have no value.

Commentary by Self- Opinion

Imaam Suyuti ↦ writes in his famous book ”Al Itiqaan“ on the authority of Ibn al Naqeeb ↦ that there are five ways of providing commentary by self opinion.

1) To comment without acquiring the relevant sciences of Deen.

2) A person begins to comment on the Mutashaabiaat (the ambiguous verses of The Quraan) the meaning and Allaah alone knows object of which.

3) To comment in such a manner so as to prove corrects a deviated school of thought.

4) To assert absolutely about a certain verse without proof that Allaah Ta'ala definitely meant a certain thing.

5) To comment merely according to one's desire and fancy.

(Al- Itiqaan fi Ulumil Quraan, Page 183, Volume 2.)

The Israelite Traditions

Israelite Ahadeeth are not to be believed; they can only be used as supporting evidence. There are three kinds of Israelite Ahadeeth.

One which we can regard as true: if they are supported by our

Ahadeeth.

The second category is regarded as false if our Ahadeeth contradicts them.

The third, which fall neither in this category nor in that, because our sources are silent about them.

We shall neither believe them nor disbelieve them. They may be quoted as the Hadeeth permits: but let us note that most of them have no value so far as religious matters are concerned.

Etiquette of Reading and Reciting The Quraan

1) Keep The Quraan in a clean place.

2) In reciting The Quraan seek only Allaah's pleasure and not any worldly gain.

3) Concentrate fully and leave aside all other preoccupations.

4) Be ritually clean, and sit in a clean place.

5) Preferably sit facing the Qibla.

6) Ibn Mas'ood ؓ read The Quraan in the Masjid while kneeling on both knees. (Abu Dawood, see Kamal, op.cit., p.114)

7) Observe humility, tranquillity, and respect.

8) Begin with ”A udhu bi Illaah … and Bismillaah“.

9) Read with a pleasant tone.

10) Ask Allaah's blessing when reading a verse which contains a promise, and ask Allaah's help when reading a verse which contains a threat.

11) Repeat important verses many times.

12) Say ”Saddaqa llahu l- azeem“ at the end of the recitation, and close with a duaa that Allaah may accept it from you.

13) Let no day pass without reading The Quraan.

14) Do not read The Quraan in a manner that disturbs others.

15) Sometimes read The Quraan alone and sometimes in a group (your family too!)

16) Reply, if someone gives Salaam while you read.

17) Stop reciting when you hear the Adhaan.

18) Observe Sajda al Tilawa.

19) Memorise as much as you can.

Abdullaah bin Mas'ood ﷺ says:

”Qari of the Quraan should distinguish himself from those people who are sleeping by remaining awake until late in the night, by weeping while others are laughing, by keeping quiet while others are gossiping, by humility from the arrogant and by remaining thoughtful from those who are enjoying.“

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar ﷺ says:

Qari of the Quraan should not gossip like others. He should not behave foolishly like fools.

He should forgive others and be good to others as in his chest he has the treasure of The Quraan.

He should talk less, laugh less, and live with dignity.

He should not have vanity and pride.

He should not indulge in useless discussions and quarrels.

He should not harm others.

He should help others when they seek his help.

He should teach others the teachings of The Quraan.

He should have high morals.

He should himself act according to the Quraanic commandments and he should try his best to understand The Quraan.

The Mashaaikh have mentioned the following six external and six internal rules of reverence when reading The Noble Quraan.

RULES OF EXTERNAL REVERENCE:

1) Perform wudhu and then sit facing the Qiblah in an extremely dignified manner (It is disrespectful to sit leaning against the wall with feet out in front while reciting the Noble Quraan. This should be avoided. Likewise the Quran should not be placed directly on the lap.)

2) Do not read rapidly, but read at a moderate pace with correct pronunciation.

3) Try to weep, even if you have to compel yourself to do so.

4) The response to the verses of mercy or of punishment should prompt one to ask for Allaah's blessings and for Allaah's help.

5) Read in a melodious voice, because there are numerous Ahadith which emphasise this.

6) Read in a low voice if insincerity is feared or it may cause disturbance to others, otherwise read aloud.

RULES OF REVERENCE WHEN READING THE QURAAN

1. The heart should be full of the glory of The Quraan i.e. realizing how sublime it is.

2. Bear in the heart the Loftiness, Majesty and Magnificence of Almighty Allaah Whose revelation is The Quraan.

3. The heart should be free from distraction and doubts.

4. Dwell upon the meaning and enjoy reading the verses.

5. Submit your heart to the subject matter of the verses you are reading. For instance, when reading the verses about the mercy, the heart should be filled with delight. When reading the verses of punishment, the heart should tremble with fear.

6. The ears should be as attentive as if Almighty Allaah Himself is speaking to him personally and the reader is listening to Him.

May Allaah out of His mercy and kindness grant all of us the ability to read The Quraan according to these rules of reverence. .

Interesting Book to Read on The Quraan

1.) Commentators of the Holy Quraan by Moulana Qazi Muhammed Zahid ul Hussaini was written in 1992. It lists with brief notes the names and history of the Commentators of The Quraan from the first to the 14th century Hijri and also includes present-day commentaries. Together some 625 commentators are mentioned.

Some Translations of The Quraan

The following are some of the notable translations of The Quraan that are currently available.

1.) Mohammed Marmaduke Picktall (1930)

2.) Abdullaah Yusuf Ali (1934)

3.) Moulana Abdur Rahmaan Tariq (July 1966 Pakistan)

4.) Mahmud Y. Zayid (1980- Lebanon)

5.) Abdul Haqq and Aisha Bewley (1999 England)

6.) Moulana Daryabadi (India) and

7.) Dr. Mohsin Khan (Madinah)

(Mufti A. H. Elias 1423 2002)